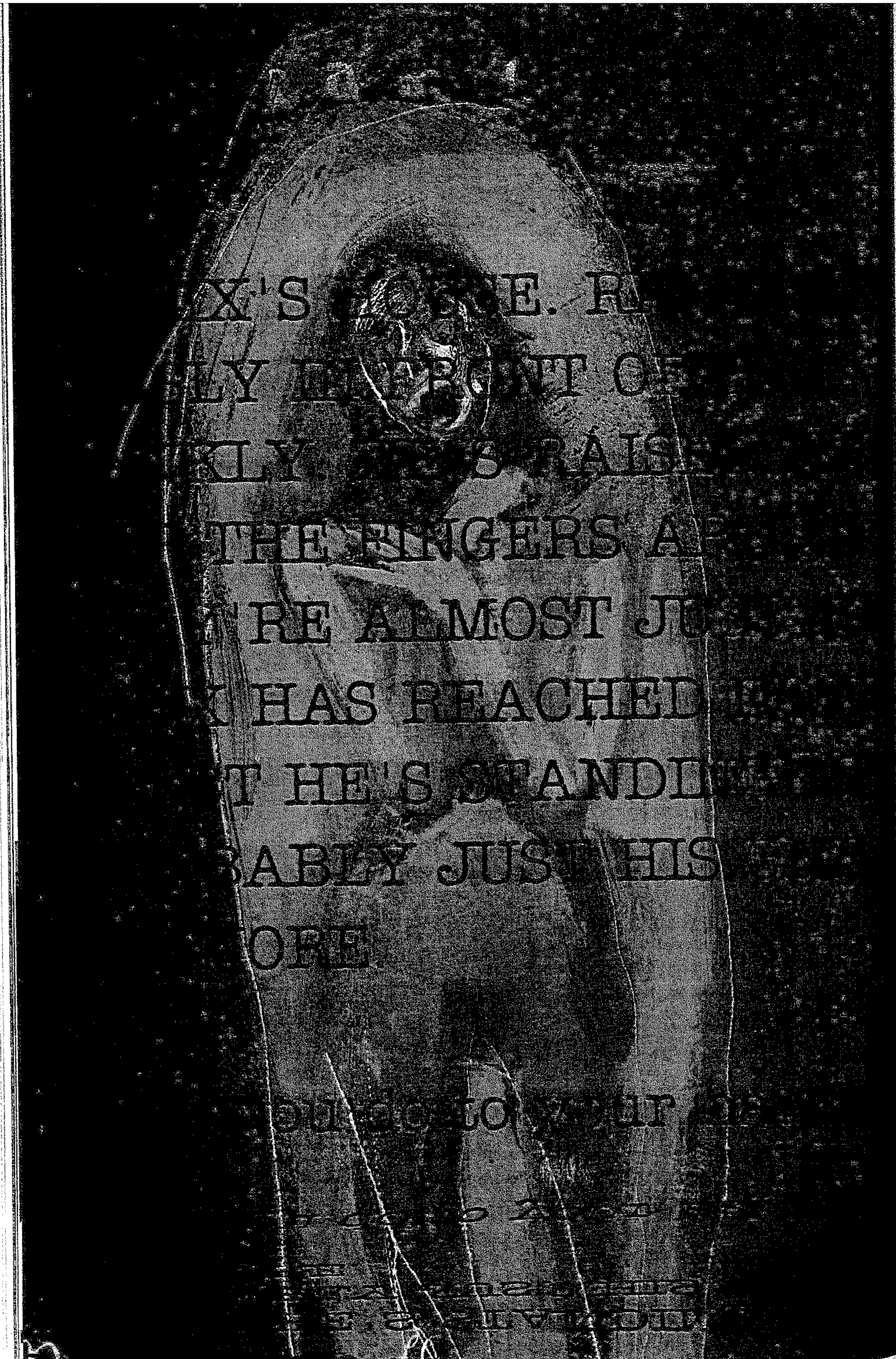


SCRIPT INTRODUCTION

by NEIL GAIMAN

Then I stripped them, scalp from skull, and my hunting dogs fed full
And their teeth I threaded neatly on a thong;
And I wiped my mouth and said,
"It is well that they are dead,
"For I know my work is right and theirs were wrong."

But my Totem saw the shame;
from his ridgepole-shrine he came,
And he told me in a vision of the night:—
"There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays,
"And every single one of them is right!"

Rudyard Kipling.
IN THE NEOLITHIC AGE. 1895

It took a little time before I could be persuaded to allow a script to be published.

For the same reason that a magician doesn't want to let you backstage when he rehearses, for the same reason you should never wander around a film set: it spoils the magic when you know how it's done.

But we all have a craving to see behind the illusion. We want to know how the magician managed to saw the lady in half without spilling blood, and put her together afterwards, apparently unharmed; we want to wander the studio back-lots and stare at the backless houses. And some of us want to know how a comic gets written.

I did.

I have always wanted to write comics. (That's not strictly true: I have always wanted to *write*, to tell stories. Comics were and are one of the media I wanted to tell stories with.)

But I could never figure it out; *how* did a writer get the story in his head onto a comics page? What did a comics script look like? What did a comics writer do?

I eventually found out, by asking someone who wrote comics (it was Alan Moore—one of the best writers ever to work in this medium) and getting him to show me what a script looked like, and how it was laid out. This he did, on one side of notebook paper.

Once I knew what a comics script looked like, the rest was easy. (No, that's not true. The rest was pretty difficult; and every story presents its own set of problems. But you know what I mean.)

Which is why I eventually agreed to allow this script to be printed. I've even added some marginal notations, and dug out from my files the folded, stapled mini-comic for this issue. (I always make a small doodled version of the comic while I'm writing, to let me know how many panels I'm putting on a page, and to suggest ideas of layout and storytelling.)

Let me throw in a warning before you begin to read the script.

This is only how *I* write a comics script. Specifically how I write SANDMAN.

There are thousands of people out in the world writing comics, and none of the others write scripts quite like this. Some just write a sequence of panel descriptions, not worrying how they'll fall on the page. Some draw doodles of what they want for an artist, with the dialogue in the margins. Sometimes the writers just suggest a plot, and then come back to it at lettering stage and write the dialogue then. Sometimes they write something closer to a movie script, just dialogue and action, and let the artists break down the story into panels.

These are all valid ways of writing a comics script. I've used a few of them myself. (But not for SANDMAN.)

A few writers put in much more detail than you'll see in this script. Some writers use far less. Some writers don't know or care who'll be drawing the story they're writing. Some do. (I do). Some artists write and draw (and often letter and colour) their own comics, and they have different ways again of writing scripts for themselves.

Which means, I suppose, that this *is* a typical comics script, insofar as every script is atypical. And it's the way I write SANDMAN.

(All the other ways of writing scripts are right, too. That's what the quotation at the top of the page is about.)

Each SANDMAN script is a letter to the artist (I drive Karen Berger, my long-suffering editor, crazy, by refusing to write a script unless I know who's going to draw it; if you write for an artist you can play to their strengths. It makes you look good); and this is a letter to Kelley Jones. (It was the first time we'd ever worked together; and working with Kelley has been fun. He's a terrific artist and a nice person.)

We picked this script to *'Calliope'* for this book as probably the most interesting for a casual reader the script for *'A Midsummer Night's Dream'* is longer and technically far more complex (it was much the hardest of these scripts to write), but it's also probably a lot less interesting simply to read, or so I have been assured.

To reiterate: this isn't *How To Write Comics The Neil Gaiman Way*. It's a script for *'Calliope.'* It's being printed here to satisfy your curiosity (if you have any) about what a SANDMAN script looks like.

There are a number of talented people involved in the production of SANDMAN. In this issue, after Kelley pencilled it, Todd Klein lettered the comic, then Malcolm Jones inked it, going over Kelley's pencils in black ink, getting the artwork to a point at which it could be reproduced (and incidentally adding a great deal to the look of the book), Robbie Busch coloured it, and somewhere in the background Karen Berger and Tom Peyer knocked themselves out making sure that everything made sense, got from place to place on time, and that we all got paid.

If you've read *'Calliope'* already, you know the story. Now you're going to see the script.

You don't have to read it, if you don't want to.

But for those of you who do, welcome backstage.

Let us show you how it was done...

Neil Gaiman

Episode 17

HI KELLEY,

WELCOME TO THE WEIRD WORLD OF SANDMAN. WHAT WE'RE DOING IS A SERIES OF SHORT STORIES FOR FOUR OR FIVE ISSUES HERE; I'VE FINISHED THE DOLL'S HOUSE STORYLINE, AND THERE WAS A WHILE TOWARD THE END OF THE STORYLINE WHEN I JUST COULDN'T TAKE IT ANY MORE -- PARTLY BECAUSE I'D KEEP GETTING NEW IDEAS FOR STORIES AND BE UNABLE TO GET THEM IN, AND ALSO BECAUSE I WANTED TO DO A FEW TOTALLY SELF-CONTAINED STORIES THAT I COULD GET OVER WITH IN 24 PAGES: THE WORRY THAT I DIDN'T HAVE A CLUE HOW DOLL'S HOUSE WAS GOING TO END (WHICH I DIDN'T, UNTIL I GOT THROUGH SANDMAN 15) WAS GETTING PRETTY NERVE-WRACKING...

THIS IS THE FIRST OF THEM. I'M CALLING THE SHORT STORIES "DREAM COUNTRY." INCIDENTALLY, KELLEY, I WRITE PRETTY FULL SCRIPT, FOR THE MOST PART. HAVING SAID THAT, IT'S A GUIDE: IF YOU SEE A WAY TO IMPROVE IT, MAKE IT WORK BETTER, THEN GO FOR IT. YOU'RE THE ARTIST, AFTER ALL.

OK -- LET'S GO.

THEY SAY THAT ON AMERICAN COP SHOWS A LOT.

....

ODD FACTS AND COINCIDENCES DEPT: SO FAR THE SANDMANS I'VE STARTED AND THEN HAD TO RESTART, BECAUSE THEY WERE HEADING OFF IN THE WRONG DIRECTION WERE: 2,7,12 AND NOW THIS ONE, 17. EVERY FIVE ISSUES...

....

OKAY KELLEY -- THE BAD NEWS. THE REASON WHY THIS IS PROBABLY GOING TO BE SLIGHTLY LATE IS ALSO THE REASON THAT IT BEARS NO RESEMBLANCE TO THE STORY I TOLD YOU ON THE PHONE. THIS IS BECAUSE I STARTED THE ONE I TOLD YOU ABOUT, SEX AND VIOLETS, TWICE, GOT SEVEN PAGES INTO ONE VERSION AND TEN PAGES, THE SECOND TIME, ON A TOTALLY DIFFERENT TREATMENT, AND EACH TIME IT DIED ON THE PAGE. WHICH MEANT THAT I BASICALLY HAD TO DECIDE WHETHER TO TRY AGAIN, OR TO STRIP THE STORY DOWN AS FAR AS I COULD, TAKE WHAT I COULD, AND START AGAIN. I SUSPECT AT SOME POINT I'LL COME BACK TO OLD PUCK, BUT IN THE MEANTIME WE'VE GOT A DIFFERENT STORY ABOUT A DIFFERENT MUSE, AND ABOUT THE TWO MEN WHO HAVE HELD HER IN THRALL, AND ABOUT THE SANDMAN, AND HIS REVENGE ON THEM. IT'S A DARKER STORY THAN THE OTHER, CREEPIER AND LESS COMFORTING.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT I'M 99% SURE IT'LL WORK THIS TIME, AND I HOPE YOU ENJOY DRAWING IT AS MUCH YOU WOULD HAVE THE OTHER.

.....

EDITORS NOTE: The script comments that appear on the following pages, in red and blue ink, are by Neil Gaiman and Kelley Jones, respectively.

Calliope.

Page 1 panel 1

WE ARE LOOKING AT THE FACE OF RICK MADOC. NO PANEL BORDER -- HE'S IN CLOSE UP, FULL FACE, LOOKING AT SOMETHING BELOW HIM WITH AN EXPRESSION OF INTERESTED DISTASTE. HE'S THIN, MID-THIRTIES, RED SHORT-CUT HAIR. NOT A CLASSICAL COMIC BOOK FACE -- HE'S GOOD-LOOKING IN A JOHN LENNONISH SORT OF WAY.

Caption - top right: May 1986.

Madoc:I don't have any idea.

Madoc:So what is it? It smells quite disgusting.

Page 1 panel 2

PULL BACK. WE'RE IN A ROOM IN MADOC'S HOUSE: HIS STUDY, BOOKSHELVES ON THE WALLS, A DESK WITH A WORD PROCESSOR ON IT. A SET OF ENCYCLOPEDIAS. FAIRLY MODERN. MAYBE SOME PAINTINGS ON THE WALL. LITTLE STATUES HERE AND THERE. THERE'S A SLIM TELEPHONE ON A TABLE IN ONE CORNER, AND, IN THE OPPOSITE CORNER OF THE ROOM, A DOOR TO THE WORLD OUTSIDE. BUT THAT'S ALL BACKGROUND, AND WE DON'T NEED TO PUSH IT HERE -- DROP IT IN AS WE MOVE AROUND THE ROOM, LOOKING AT THESE PEOPLE. WE'RE LOOKING AT MADOC, WHO IS WEARING A BROWN LEATHER JACKET, TEE SHIRT AND JEANS, AND A YOUNGER MAN, IN GLASSES, A DOCTOR (ALTHOUGH NOT WEARING A WHITE COAT) FELIX GARRISON. DR GARRISON IS HOLDING SOMETHING OUT -- IT'S BLACK, LIKE A LARGE, HAIRY STONE, OR A FOSSILISED TRIBBLE COVERED IN SLIME. IT'S A TRICHINOBEZOAR -- YOU MAY BE ABLE TO FIND A REFERENCE PICTURE OF SOME KIND IN A MEDICAL DICTIONARY. THE DR LOOKS RATHER PLEASED WITH HIMSELF. IT'S EARLY EVENING IN EARLY SUMMER OR LATE SPRING.

Garrison:It's what you were asking for. It's a bezoar.

Madoc:Hang on, I thought they were like, precious stones?

Page 1 panel 3

WE'RE LOOKING AT THE GUNKY, HORRIBLE, CALCIFIED MASS, HELD IN THE DOCTOR'S HAND, IN CLOSE UP. IT LOOKS REVOLTING. MAKE IT LOOK HAIRY AND SLIMY AT THE SAME TIME: IMAGINE A CAT-SICKED-UP HAIRBALL TO THE MAX...

DR:Most of them are.

This is a trichinobezoar -- it's made of hair. I cut it out of a young woman's stomach this afternoon. Lovely long hair she had. Trouble was, she'd been sucking it, chewing it, -- swallowing the hairs.
Must've been doing it for years.

Guy Lawley M.D. found me a photo of a trichobezoar afterwards. It looked a lot like what Kelley had drawn. Guy is the only doctor I know who also writes comics from time to time, and he treats my stranger medical requests, for appropriate cancers or venereal diseases, with more respect than they perhaps deserve.

Page 1 panel 4

PULL BACK AGAIN. WE CAN SEE, CLOSE TO US, THE DR, LEANING DOWN, OR CROUCHING, GETTING A BOOK OUT OF HIS LARGE BLACK DOCTOR'S BAG. HE'S LEFT THE THING ON THE TABLE, AND RICK IS STARING AT IT IN DISGUST. POSSIBLY POKING AT IT WITH A FINGER.

Dr:Technically that's known as the Rapunzel syndrome.
Anyway, it's a bezoar. Mission accomplished.

Madoc:It's disgusting. But thanks. What do I owe you, Felix?

Page 1 panel 5

OKAY -- WE'RE LOOKING AT THE TWO OF THEM. FELIX IS HOLDING OUT A BOOK TOWARDS RICK, A LITTLE NERVOUSLY. RICK'S JUST PLEASED NOT TO HAVE TO HAVE PAID ANY MONEY FOR THIS THING. IF WE CAN SEE THE BOOK -- IT'S A HARDBACK, BY THE WAY -- IT'S CALLED THE CABARET OF DR CALIGARI, BY RICHARD MADOC.

Dr:Oh, nothing.

It would have only been incinerated, or popped into a jar for students to stare at.
Just don't tell anyone where you got it.

And, um, I was wondering if you'd sign this for me?

Rick:Sure. No problem.

Page 2 panel 1

WE ARE LOOKING AT THE TITLE PAGE OF THE BOOK -- WE CAN SEE PRINTED OR TYPESET, IN BLACK, THE CABARET OF DR CALIGARI, RICK'S NAME, AND UNDERNEATH THAT, IN BLUE OVERLAY LETTERING, HANDWRITING -- POSSIBLY WE CAN SEE A PEN AT THE BOTTOM FINISHING OFF THE SIGNATURE. KELLEY, UNLESS YOU WANT TO DRAW ANY HANDS HERE, OR THE PEN, THIS IS PROBABLY ALL TODD'S PANEL.

TODD CAN DO IT, MY PENMANSHIP SUCKS. K

Book title -- black printing: The Cabaret of Dr Caligari.
By Richard Madoc.

Handwriting -- blue overlay:For Felix Garrison, with thanks, Rick Madoc.

Rick: (off): There you go.

Page 2 panel 2

FELIX, HOLDING THE BOOK AT ARMS' LENGTH, IN BOTH HANDS, READING THE INSCRIPTION. HE LOOKS REALLY PLEASED.
Felix:This is great. It's a real thrill for me, to, you know, be able to do something for one of my heroes. I loved the book. Amazing stuff.

Felix:So, um, what do you need the bezoar for?

Page 2 panel 3

WE'RE LOOKING AT RICK. HE SEEMS SLIGHTLY UNCOMFORTABLE AT THIS.

Rick:Like you were asking the other day -- where do writers get our crazy ideas? Heh.

Rick:It's research, really.

Felix:I heard you were writing a sequel to the Cabaret -- I'm really excited.

Rick:Oh. Great.

Page 2 panel 4

FOREGROUND -- THE PHONE. IN THE BACKGROUND WE CAN SEE RICK, HEADING FOR THE PHONE, AND FELIX, PICKING UP HIS BAG, AND PREPARING TO LEAVE.

Rick:Uh, that's the phone. Listen, thanks again for the thing.

Felix:No problem. I know how busy you are. I'll just let myself out, then. 'Bye.

FX: Near phone, small: Breep breep.

Page 2 panel 5

KEEP THE PHONE IN THE SAME POSITION IT WAS BEFORE, BUT RICK IS NOW IN THE FOREGROUND, AND HE'S PICKED UP THE PHONE. IS TALKING INTO IT. POSSIBLY WE CAN SEE FELIX GOING OUT THE DOOR INTO THE STREET, OR POSSIBLY HE SIMPLY ISN'T IN THE ROOM ANY LONGER.

Rick:Hello? Richard Madoc speaking.

Phone:Rick? It's Harry. Listen, we have to talk. Your publishers were onto me again today.

Rick:Oh. Hi Harry.

Page 2 panel 6

SIMILAR SHOT, ONLY RICK LOOKS REALLY MISERABLE, UNCOMFORTABLE, SHIFTY. AS IF HE DOESN'T WANT THIS CONVERSATION.

Phone:Listen, the novel's almost nine months overdue, and they're threatening to cause trouble. You're in breach of contract, Rick.

Phone:Is it finished yet?

Rick:Nearly finished.

Phone:Well, how much have you got to go?

Page 4 panel 1

NOW, WE'RE IN ERASMUS FRY'S HOUSE FOR THE NEXT FOUR PAGES, AND IT'S CLAUSTROPHOBIC AND CRAMPED -- LONG, DIMLY LIT CORRIDORS, CRAMMED WITH OLD STATUARY AND PHOTOGRAPHS AND BOOKS. BLACK PANEL BORDERS TO BLEED FROM HERE UNTIL THE END OF PAGE SEVEN. THREE PANELS ON THE TOP TIER. THEY'RE IN THE HALLWAY. IT'S DARK AND GLOOMY, WITH LARGE OLD PHOTOGRAPHS HANGING ON THE WALLS. THE OLD MAN IS SHUFFLING DOWN THE CORRIDOR WITH THE YOUNGER MAN, TALLER, BEHIND HIM. THE HALLWAY IS ALSO SET WITH MIRRORS, REFLECTING THE FACES OF THE MEN. ERASMUS IS NOT A NICE OLD MAN.

Erasmus:How are you, M'boy? Written anything profound and stirring recently?

Rick:You know I haven't, Mister Fry.

Erasmus:No. We'll go into my study, and you can show me my present.

page 4 panel 2

THEY'RE NOW IN THE OLD MAN'S STUDY. THE OLD MAN IS STANDING UP AND POURING TWO GLASSES OF SHERRY FROM A CUT-GLASS DECANTER. WHEN WE SEE IT, THE STUDY IS EXPENSIVELY FURNISHED, DOMINATED BY A LARGE BLACK- AND -WHITE PHOTOGRAPH OF ERASMUS AGED ABOUT TWENTY. EMPTY FIREPLACE. IT'S ALL DUSTY. IT LOOKS LIKE IT HASN'T BEEN CLEANED OR TIDIED FOR YEARS. THERE ARE A COUPLE OF ARMCHAIRS IN THERE, AND A DESK. RICK IS ABOUT TO SIT IN AN ARMCHAIR. HE'S STILL HOLDING THE PLASTIC BAG.

Erasmus:Ah -- an excuse for a sherry.

Erasmus:Cheap stuff, of course. I'm not wasting the good stuff on a little shit like you.

Page 4 panel 3

ERASMUS, SITTING IN THE ARMCHAIR, RAISING THE GLASS OF SHERRY TO HIS LIPS. HE'S ABOUT TO GIVE A LECTURE TO RICK. HE'S PROBABLY RAISING ONE FINGER, OR LEANING HIS CHIN ON ONE HAND. HE'S NOT SMILING. HE LOOKS VERY COMFORTABLE.

Erasmus: Let me tell you about Bezoars. Word comes from the Persian. Pad-zahr. It means counter-poison. Antidote. Mainly found in the stomachs of goats and gazelles.

—DESCRIPTION IN PARACELSUS BOOK

Page 4 panel 4
AGAIN, RUN THIS ACROSS THE MIDDLE OF THE PAGE. THE TWO OF THEM SITTING IN ARMCHAIRS, OPPOSITE EACH OTHER: THE YOUNG MAN, ANTSY, SCARED, NERVOUS; THE OLD MAN, COMFORTABLE, POWERFUL. RICK HAS PUT HIS SHERRY DOWN ON THE FLOOR, ISN'T DRINKING IT. WE CAN SEE BOOKSHELVES ACROSS THE WAY -- POSSIBLY A CHESS SET IN ONE CORNER. THEY'RE IN THE LOWER HALF OF THE PANEL, LEAVING PLENTY OF ROOM FOR THE HUGE WORD BALLOONS.

Erasmus:Oh yes. Rapunzel, let down your hairball. A genuine trichinobezoar. The smell comes from the partly digested particles of food, trapped in--

Erasmus:I'm sorry. I'm lecturing again. An old writer with no-one else to talk to gets fond of the sound of his own voice...

Page 5 panel 3

ERASMUS AND RICK ARE BOTH STANDING UP, NOW. ERASMUS HAS EXTENDED AN ARM, IS USHERING RICK OUT OF THE ROOM.

Erasmus:I will put the bezoar with the rest of them.

I suppose that you want her, now.

Did you bring any clothes?

Rick:Clothes? I didn't know I...

Erasmus:Never mind. I have an old coat you may use.

Page 5 panel 4

THEY'RE WALKING UP STAIRS, NOW, A NARROW, DARK STAIRWAY, HUNG WITH BOOK-COVERS AND PLAYBILLS, ALL WITH THE NAME ERASMUS FRY ON THEM, IN LARGE LETTERS. I DON'T KNOW IF WE CAN SEE ANY TITLES IN THIS OR THE NEXT PANELS, BUT THEY'RE THINGS LIKE A STRANGER IN EDEN OR HALL OF SHADOWS OR HERE COMES A CANDLE, THINGS THAT SOUND LIKE FAMOUS NOVELS OF THIRTY YEARS AGO. RICK IS NERVOUS, ERASMUS KNOWS EXACTLY WHERE HE'S GOING.

Erasmus:I caught her on Mount Helicon, you know. 1927. Greece. I was 27. I'll be 87 next year.

She was bathing in a spring, and I caught her and bound her with Moly -- sorcerer's garlic, as it's sometimes called -- and with certain rituals.

Page 5 panel 5

THEY'RE AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS, WALKING DOWN A NARROW CORRIDOR. IF YOU WANT TO MESS WITH THE ANGLES, SO THE INSIDE SEEMS SUBTLY WRONG, THEN BE MY GUEST. IT'S REALLY DARK. WE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO SEE THEM, BUT IT'S VERY GLOOMY AND ILL-LIT, ERASMUS HAS PULLED OUT A KEY, WHICH HE'S HOLDING IN FRONT OF HIM. I SUSPECT THEY'RE WALKING TOWARDS US. ERASMUS IS IN THE FRONT, OF COURSE.

Erasmus:The hardest part was getting her back to England.

Erasmus:They say one ought to woo her kind, but I must say I found force most efficacious...

After all, I got the fame and the glory. I created the novels, the poems, the plays...

Page 7 panel 1

(JUST A BRIEF APOLOGY -- I'M AFRAID ERASMUS TALKS AN AWFUL LOT, AND MAKES SURE HE TAKES THE LONGEST POSSIBLE ROUTE THROUGH ANY SENTENCE. I TRY TO KEEP HIM SHORT-WINDED, BUT HE DOES RATHER TEND TO OVERLOAD ANY PANELS HE'S IN WITH WORDS. OH WELL --AT LEAST THIS IS HIS LAST PAGE ON STAGE, AS IT WERE... IF NECESSARY YOU COULD SLIP THIS PANEL ONTO THE BOTTOM RIGHT HAND CORNER OF THE SPLASH PAGE, BUT I THINK IT'LL WORK BETTER AS A SPLASH.) WE'RE LOOKING AT CALLIOPE, IN CLOSE UP. A FACE SHOT, SHADOWY, AS SHE STARES STRAIGHT OUT AT US. SHE'S COME OUT OF THE ROOM, AND IS NOW IN THE HALLWAY, SO THE LIGHT IS DIRECTLY ABOVE HER, CASTING LOW SHADOWS FROM HER NOSE AND ACROSS HER EYES. I TEND TO IMAGINE HER AS A STARVED YOUNG BRIGITTE BARDOT, BUT THAT'S POSSIBLY BECAUSE THERE'S A BRIGITTE BARDOT MOVIE ON LATE NIGHT TV RIGHT NOW. SHE HAS A COMBINATION OF GRANDEUR AND INNOCENCE, HERE, BUT OBVIOUSLY HATES ERASMUS, IS COUNTING THE DAYS AND THE HOURS UNTIL HER IMPRISONMENT IS OVER. HE MAY HAVE HER SPIRIT, BUT HE DOESN'T HAVE HER SOUL, AND SHE SAYS:

Calliope:What would you with me now, Erasmus? Am I now to perform for your amusement? Is this man to be our audience?

Page 7 panel 2

ANOTHER FULL-PANEL FACE SHOT, HEAD AND SHOULDERS, THIS TIME OF ERASMUS, PROBABLY NOT LOOKING DIRECTLY AT US, BUT OFF SLIGHTLY. HE'S BITCHY AND OLD AND HATES EVERYTHING, ESPECIALLY HER.

Erasmus:Don't get yourself all worked up, Calliope.

No, this is Richard Madoc. He's a novelist -- or at least, he's written one extremely successful first novel, and has found himself quite unable to write anything else.

Page 7 panel 3

NOW WE'RE LOOKING AT RICK, AGAIN FULL FACE, AS HE STARES AT US, LIPS PRESSED CLOSE TOGETHER, STARING AT THE GIRL (AT US) HIS EXPRESSION UNREADABLE. MAKE THESE THREE PANELS VERY SIMILAR, JUST WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE IN THEM, IF YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN.

Erasmus (off):Richard, this is Calliope. The youngest of the nine muses. She was Homer's muse, so she ought to be good enough for you.

Calliope, I'm giving you to Richard. You're his now.

Page 7 panel 4

PULL BACK NOW. CLOSE TO US, ON THE RIGHT OF PANEL, HER BACK TO US, IS CALLIOPE, AND BEYOND HER, FACING US, ARE THE OLD MAN, AND, TALLER AND YOUNGER AND ILL-AT-EASE, MADOC. HER ARMS ARE NOW AT HER SIDES.

Calliope:But you said -- you told me, you promised that you would free me before you died. You said I could have my freedom...

Erasmus:Put not your trust in princes, my dear.

Erasmus:Once believed to possess mystic powers: they can remedy poison, make the sick well. Edward IV survived the effects of a poisoned wound, due solely to a bezoar in his possession.

Queen Elizabeth the First had a bezoar set in gold, with unicorn's horn, given to her by John Dee, her spy and magician.

Page 4 panel 5

THREE PANELS ON THE BOTTOM TIER. WE'RE LOOKING AT RICK -- HE'S SITTING THERE LISTENING TO THIS STUFF, GETTING MORE AND MORE IRRITATED -- HE'S PROBABLY LOOKING UPWARDS, BORED AND NERVOUS. NEARLY EXASPERATED. THE BACK OF THE ARMCHAIR FRAMES HIS HEAD.

Erasmus (off):For the common people, apothecaries would lend out bezoars at extortionate rates, for a week, or a fortnight...

Page 4 panel 6

SAME SHOT, BUT RICK'S HALF-STOOD UP, PUSHING HIMSELF UP WITH HIS ARMS AT HIS SIDE. HE LOOKS UPSET, IRRITATED, ANGRY.

Rick:Will you shut up?

I haven't written a word in a year -- nothing I haven't thrown away! Do you know what that's like?

Rick:When it's just you, and a blank sheet of paper?

Page 4 panel 7

MOVE IN ON RICK. HIS FACE IS SHADOWY, AND PAINED. IT'S LIKE HE'S BARING HIS SOUL HERE.

Rick:When you can't think of a single thing worth saying, a single character that people could believe in, a single story that hasn't been told a thousand times before...

Page 5 panel 1

THE OLD MAN HAS STOOD UP, IS LOOKING DOWN SHARPLY. HE'S REACHING OUT HIS HAND.

Erasmus:Of course I know what it's like. Don't be a fool, boy.

Erasmus:Let me see my present.

Page 5 panel 2

THE OLD MAN HOLDING UP THE BEZOAR, ADMIRING IT ON HIS OPEN HAND. HE'S IN LECTURE MODE AGAIN.

Page 5 panel 6

THEY'RE STANDING IN FRONT OF A DOOR. ERASMUS HAS PUT THE KEY INTO THE LOCK, AND IS TURNING THE KEY. ONE BARE BULB DANGLES FROM A FRAYED FLEX, LIGHTING THE HALLWAY, JUST. I MEAN, IT'S ABOUT A FIFTEEN WATT BULB, BUT IT'S A BULB.

Erasmus:I don't need her anymore, Madoc. And you do.

Here she is.

AND THEN WE GO OVER THE PAGE TO SEE WHAT'S IN THE ROOM...

PAGE 6 PANEL 1

SPLASH PAGE. DARK BORDER AROUND THE PAGE. WE'RE LOOKING STRAIGHT THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR -- POSSIBLY THE PANEL BORDER IS THE DOORWAY. AND WE'RE LOOKING AT IS APPARENTLY A THIN, FIFTEEN-YEAR OR POSSIBLY JUST-SIXTEEN OLD GIRL. SHE'S STANDING THERE STARING AT US. SHE HAS A BEAUTIFUL FACE, WITH DEEP CHEEKBONES -- SHE'S A GODDESS AFTER ALL -- AND A THIN BODY: SHE LOOKS AS IF SHE'S BEEN STARVED FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS. WE CAN SEE THE OUTLINE OF HER HIPBONES, AND NOT QUITE COUNT HER RIBS. SHE'S NAKED. SHE LOOKS VERY VULNERABLE -- THIS IS THE VULNERABILITY OF NAKEDNESS; IF YOU'VE EVER SEEN ANY PHOTOS OF FAMINE VICTIMS, OR CONCENTRATION CAMP VICTIMS, THERE'S A POINT AT WHICH NAKEDNESS TOTALLY CEASES TO TITILLATE, INSTEAD JUST AROUSES FEELINGS OF PITY. (BILL SIENKIEWICZ CAUGHT IT PERFECTLY IN THE MENTAL HOSPITAL SEQUENCES IN ELEKTRA: ASSASSIN #1.) EITHER SHE HAS HER HANDS ON HER OPPOSITE SHOULDERS, HUGGING HERSELF, OR SHE'S COVERING HER BREASTS WITH ONE ARM, AND REACHING DOWN WITH HER OTHER HAND, COVERING HER PUBIC AREA WITH A HAND. IT'S NOT FALSE MODESTY -- IT'S A WISH TO PROTECT HERSELF FROM. SHE DOESN'T LOOK SCARED -- NERVOUS, PERHAPS, OR UNHAPPY MORE LIKE. SHE ALSO HAS MASSES OF SHAGGY BLONDISH HAIR, DOWN TO THE SMALL OF HER BACK. THE KEY HERE IS VULNERABILITY -- THIS SHOULDN'T LOOK TITILLATING, IT'S NOT A HUBBA HUBBA KIND OF NAKED WOMAN SHOT; IT'S ONE THAT IT ALMOST HURTS TO LOOK AT. TEAR THEIR HEARTS OUT, KELLEY. SHE'S LIT BY THE MUTED BULB IN THE HALL. DIMLY BEHIND HER WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE OUT A CHEAP CAMP BED WITH A THIN BLANKET ON IT. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PANEL, PREFERABLY IN THE KIND OF LETTERING WE HAD FOR THE TITLE OF #7, IS THE TITLE.

Kelley drew Calliope as really really skinny, with horribly protruding ribs. Karen felt that this was too extreme, and when Malcolm inked it he made her a little less skinny...

Erasmus (off, left): Her name's Calliope.

Title: Calliope.

And Credits.
At the bottom of the page, Sandman (logo) characters created by Gaiman, Kieth and Dringenberg.

Page 7 panel 5

BACK TO CALLIOPE. SHE'S CRYING, SILENTLY. ONE TEAR IS TRICKLING DOWN HER FACE. SHE'S RAISED A HAND TO HER MOUTH, BUT HER CHIN IS STILL RAISED PROUDLY.

Erasmus (off):Nor in an aging author who has never been what one might call a shining example when it came to keeping his word...

Writers are liars, my dear. Surely you have realised that by now?

Page 7 panel 6

PULL BACK AGAIN FOR A LONG SHOT. MADOC IS PUTTING A COAT AROUND CALLIOPE'S SHOULDERS. ERASMUS HAS TURNED HIS BACK ON BOTH OF THEM, IS WALKING TOWARDS US.

Erasmus:Take the little cow away, Madoc. I never want to see either of you again.

Page 7 panel 7

OUT ON THE STREET, NOW. MADOC AND CALLIOPE ARE STANDING THERE -- SHE'S WEARING THE COAT, BUTTONED UP, AND NOTHING UNDER IT, SO WE CAN SEE HER BARE LEGS AND FEET ON THE HARD SIDEWALK. ERASMUS IS STANDING IN THE DOORWAY, FACING THEM, FACING US. FOR THE ONLY TIME, HE LOOKS VULNERABLE, INSECURE. HE LOOKS OLD.

Erasmus:However, if you ever happen to feel a spark of gratitude, you might want to persuade some publisher to bring 'Here Comes A Candle' back into print.

Erasmus:I was particularly proud of that one.

Page 8 panel 1

THIS IS OPPOSITE AN AD PAGE. OKAY. NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME WE SLIDE OUT OF REAL-TIME AND INTO AN ALMOST MONTAGE MODE. OVER THE NEXT FEW PAGES WE'RE GOING TO COVER A FEW YEARS IN REAL TIME. WE'RE ALSO OPENING UP HERE, SO THE FEELING OF CLAUSTROPHOBIA, WE SHOULD HAVE GOT FROM THE LAST FEW PAGES, SINCE WE ENTERED FRY'S HOUSE, SHOULD BE RELIEVED. WHITE PANEL BORDERS HERE AGAIN, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE PAGE 4. WE'RE LOOKING AT THE TOP, ATTIC ROOM OF A HOUSE -- MADOC'S HOUSE, -- FROM OUTSIDE. WE CAN SEE THE BRICKWORK, AND A WINDOW, BARRED WITH A METAL GRILLE. THROUGH THE WINDOW WE CAN SEE, ON THE INSIDE, CALLIOPE, LOOKING AT US SILENTLY. SHE'S NAKED AGAIN, BUT WE CAN PROBABLY ONLY SEE HER HEAD AND BARE SHOULDERS, AND THE SIDE OF HER ARMS.

Caption:And Madoc took Calliope back to his home, and locked her in the topmost room, which he had prepared for her.

WHITE INK ON BLACK
FOR FIGURE of CALLIOPE

I changed "bare wooden floor to "musty old camp-bed" when I saw the art-work. (obvious reasons.)

Page 8 panel 2

NOW I WANT TO TRY TO GET ACROSS THE RAPE, AND THE HORROR AND THE DOMINANCE, FAIRLY SUBTLY, DOING ALL THE WORK IN THE READER'S HEAD. THE WHOLE THING SHOULD BE REALLY UNDERSTATED. WHAT WE'RE ACTUALLY LOOKING AT IN THIS PAGE ARE BARE WOODEN FLOORBOARDS. AND COMING IN FROM THE RIGHT, WE CAN SEE CALLIOPE'S LEFT ARM AND HAND, PALM UPWARD, LAYING FLAT ON THE FLOOR. COMING DOWN FROM ABOVE IS RICK'S RIGHT ARM; HIS HAND IS CLAMPED AROUND HER WRIST, HOLDING IT DOWN TO THE GROUND. THAT'S ALL WE CAN SEE.

Caption:His first action was to rape her, nervously, on the bare wooden floor. musty old camp-bed.

Caption:She's not even human, he told himself. She's thousands of years old. But her flesh was warm, and her breath was sweet, and she choked back tears like a child whenever he hurt her.

Page 8 panel 3

WE ARE NOW DOWN IN HIS STUDY, FROM PAGE ONE, AND HE'S SITTING DOWN IN THE CHAIR NEXT TO HIS WORD-PROCESSOR, SMOKING A CIGARETTE. HE LOOKS VERY PLEASED WITH HIMSELF, SMILING A LAZY SMILE, HIS FEET UP ON THE DESK. THE SMOKE FROM THE CIGARETTE DRIFTS UPWARD. HE'S NOW BAREFOOT, AND JUST WEARING JEANS AND A SINGLET.

I sent Kelley some photos I took of my work-space, to give him an idea of the kind of place I had in mind. He reproduced it embarrassingly accurately. (Although he left out the Groucho Marx statue.)

Caption:It occurred to him momentarily that the old man might have cheated him: given him a real girl. That he, Rick Madoc, might possibly have done something wrong, even criminal...

Caption:But afterwards, relaxing in his study, something shifted inside his head.

Page 8 panel 4

WE'RE NOW BEHIND THE WORD PROCESSOR. WE CAN SEE THE BACK OF HIS HEAD, PERHAPS HIS HANDS ON THE KEYBOARD. AND WE CAN SEE THE SCREEN, IN FRONT OF HIM. I'LL GIVE YOU SOME TEXT THAT COULD BE REDUCED AND PUT ON THE SCREEN -- FAILING THAT JUST MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THERE'S TEXT ON THE SCREEN. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT WE CAN SEE HIS FACE REFLECTED IN THE SCREEN, OR PARTLY REFLECTED ON ONE SIDE OF THE SCREEN. IF WE CAN, HE'S SMILING.

Screen: CHAPTER THREE. "AND SOME IN VELVET GOWNS"

"Your face," he said to her. "What have you done to your face?"

Marion shrugged. "I wanted to look on the outside like I do on the inside," she said simply, not putting down the knife.

Caption:He switched on the word processor to write it down before it fled.

Caption:He had been writing for three hours before he surfaced enough to realise that he had begun his second novel.

Although they aren't together in this collection the ad placement in the original comic should have ensured that pages 9 and [illegible] opposite each other in Sandman #17 [illegible]

Page 9 panel 1

OKAY, FIVE PANELS ON THE PAGE, IN THREE TIERS. TOP TIER OF THREE PANELS, THEN TWO PANELS BELOW THAT: BASICALLY IT'S A NINE-PANEL GRID. FIRST PANEL, WE'RE LOOKING AT CALLIOPE, SITTING ON THE FLOOR OF THE ATTIC ROOM, IN THE CORNER OF THE ROOM, HANDS CLASPED IN FRONT OF HER. SHE'S STILL SORT OF NAKED, BUT, ALONE, SHE'S MORE COMFORTABLE WITH HER NAKEDNESS: HAVING SAID THAT, BEAR IN MIND THAT THE MUSES (UNLIKE THE GRACES) WERE ALWAYS DEPICTED CLASSICALLY AS BEING DRESSED IN LIGHT SHIFTS: THEY WERE ALWAYS CLOTHED, SO SHE'S NOT AT EASE, NAKED. ACTUALLY, ON REFLECTION, HOW ABOUT KEEPING HER IN THE COAT THAT SHE WAS IN BEFORE, ALTHOUGH IT'S NOT ACTUALLY DONE UP: IT'S LOOSE AND OPEN, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD SHADOW HER BODY. WE'RE ABOUT FIVE FEET AWAY FROM HER.

PLAY WITH ANGLES LAYOUT - CONTRAST CALLIOPE TO EMPTINESS OF THE ATTIC

Calliope:Gracious ladies, mother of the Camenae, hear my prayer.
Calliope: Melete, Mneme, Aiode, attend my supplication.

Page 9 panel 2

RIGHT, WE'RE ZOOMING IN ON HER, SO NOW WE'RE LOOKING AT HER CHEST TO HEAD HERE. SHE'S LOOKING DOWN -- HER HANDS STILL CLASPED IN FRONT OF HER. SHE'S PRAYING, AND SHE'S ALSO VERY SAD, HURTING INSIDE. SHE HAS NO HOPE THAT ANYONE WILL RESPOND.

calliope:It is I, your daughter Calliope, who calls you, as I have called you a thousand times. I...

I implore you, ladies, deliver me from this place and this time.

Page 9 panel 3

RIGHT, WE'VE GOT A FINAL CLOSE-UP ON HER FACE, FRAMED BY THE FALLING HAIR, EYES LOOKING DOWN, OR HIDDEN BY LASHES.

Calliope:To whom can I speak, in my grief? I who am laden with wretchedness.

Calliope:Ladies of Meditation, Remembrance and Song, hearken to me.

The panel placement meant we moved a few of these balloons around.

Page 9 panel 4

OKAY -- THIS ONE RUNS ALL THE WAY ACROSS THE MIDDLE TIER: LEFT TO RIGHT, WE'RE LOOKING AT MELETE, MNEME, AIODE. NOW WE'RE PLAYING WITH A RUNNING THEME IN SANDMAN, OF THE TRIPLE GODDESS. HUNTING